

Biography:
My mother, the packrat

saves nostalgia
 like green thumbs
 for her garden,
saves broken glass
 to paint pictures on,
saves memorabilia,
 obituaries & prunes,
saves 5,684 recipes
 she has never tried,
and has a scrapbook
 of prayers yet to offer,
 all unanswered.

St. Elizabeth's Ghost

The ghost of St. Elizabeth's
asylum is not dead. I saw him on TV,
traveling through ancient ruins
of a mind, calligraphing Chinese
lyrics, dialoging Confucius
among the Cantos of Pound
politics, war, hate/love, peace.

I have met him through the ages,
though generations outdistance us,
we have scanned and walled together the words;
I have gone through wards of pages
to touch his fingertips,
which have become porcelain.

Some say they saw his cape
brisking the wind in Venetian streets
supported by cane/ or thought,
perhaps, in a special box at Spoleto.

The ghost of St. Elizabeth's is NOT dead;
after his release, drained and postulate
I heard his tempering voice declare:
"All I have left is to contemplate."

-- Paul Mariah

Walnut Creek, Calif.